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AUTHOR Fine, Jim
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ABSTRACT

There are others in the community besides lawyers and police officers who can serve as useful resource persons in law-related education (LRE). Business people, representatives of civic groups, and others can offer students interesting perspectives on the law. School partnerships with civic and community groups can result in several desirable outcomes: (1) students will become aware of the many civic and professional roles crucial to the vitality of the community; (2) students will become aware of career opportunities; (3) students will interact with adults outside of the school and home; and (4) the quality of the future workforce and attitudes about the community will improve. A number of successful community school partnerships are presented. The first section shows how the business community is involved in LRE in Los Angeles, California, through one program called Business Issues in the Classroom and another called Youth Community Service. The next section looks at some cities where LRE teachers and the local media have worked together to help students develop a new appreciation of the media and its role in current events. Other organizations and groups one might want to involve in LRE are the American Lawyers Auxiliary, people and businesses in the sports world, commercial artists and publishers, public utility companies, and civic groups. Examples are given from each of these sources. (JB)

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN NO. 3

MOBILIZING COMMUNITY GROUPS FOR LAW-RELATED EDUCATION

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Bulletin

American Bar Association Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship

MOBILIZING COMMUNITY GROUPS FOR LAW-RELATED EDUCATION

by Jim Fine

When LRE teachers begin to think about who to tap as a classroom resource, they often think "lawyer" or "police officer." Both will contribute a great deal of information that is useful and interesting. There are others in the community, however, who can also offer students interesting perspectives on the law. Business men and women, representatives of civic groups, and others can contribute a great deal to law-related education in schools and the community.

This bulletin will share LRE leaders' tips about mobilizing community resources. Their experiences illustrate how a broad range of professions have been enlisted to enliven the law-related education curriculum. Reporters, sports figures, publishers, and commercial artists suggest just a few of the possibilities. Every time some new group or business enters the LRE community, we are all richer for the new lessons that evolve from the contact.

The evaluation studies of law-related education conducted by the Center for Action Research and the Social Studies Education Consortium emphasize the important contribution that resource people make to LRE's success. Although the manner in which resource people are used varies dramatically, the appropriate use of outside resource people is more strongly associated with reducing delinquent behavior than any other classroom practice.

Most educators have success in attracting community people or groups. Teachers report that resource people are very receptive to participating in a broad range of presentations drawing on their experience and knowledge.

School partnerships with civic and community groups can result in a number of desirable outcomes:

1. the students will become aware of the many civic and professional roles crucial to the vitality of the community;
2. students will become aware of career opportunities as well as how a community/civic organization or business operates;
3. students will interact with adults outside of the school and home; and
4. the quality of the future workforce and attitudes about the community will improve.

In the following sections we will examine a number of successful community/school partnerships. These original ideas are workable for all LRE programs. First we will look at how businesses become part of the law-related education programs, then explore ways to use local media, and finally move on to less common resource groups.

Business in the Classroom

In Los Angeles, California, a local program called Business Issues in the Classroom, sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) promotes student understanding of the business environment and the economic, legal and ethical considerations that affect business decision making. Funding for the program comes from corporate donations. Lesson plans present students with actual business dilemmas, and students participate in activities which place them in the roles of business decision makers. Business Issues in the Classroom offers an opportunity for students to meet with business resource volunteers who visit classrooms to lead discussions and activities.

The community and the school build an interactive partnership, not one where a business is a sponsor in name only. For example, one of the activities involves business and school people in planning curriculum and recruiting business volunteers. The program also holds an annual Business Issues Day conference for students, educators and business people to discuss contemporary business topics in an informal setting.

The benefits for students are that they mature in their views of how the world outside the school works. They learn concern for others by seeing how the business world operates on trust and interaction of people of very different backgrounds. They see how the thriving entrepreneur depends on the truck driver and union boss to move goods in a timely manner. In sum, it allows them to learn about different vocations and improve their citizenship attitudes and skills outside the normal school setting.

Youth Involved in Community Services

Another CRF community outreach program is called Youth Community Service (YCS). This program, established in 1984 and funded by the Ford Foundation, is implemented in cooperation with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) in twenty-two high schools. The program assists youth in developing leadership skills and applying them in community service projects within their schools and communities. The activities in which students participate include:

- two-day leadership training retreats where they attend workshops, simulation activities, and share ideas with peers and community leaders;
- ongoing school meetings to hone leadership skills and plan and implement service projects;
- *YCS Community Beat*, a quarterly that enables students to write about these experiences;
- community service workshops where the students can network, receive leadership project ideas and continue to develop skills and involvement with community leaders; and
- special English skill builders, which are activities that emphasize reading, writing, speaking and developing research skills in leadership tasks. Academic credit may be available for student participants.

The program builds positive bonds between youth and the local institutions that are a part of everyone's life. It brings together youngsters from diverse racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups, strengthens self-esteem and can change adult attitudes about youth.

Through these public service activities, students learn the importance of making a personal commitment to their communities. They learn to make decisions that have an impact on the lives and actions of others, and they see tangible evidence of the resulting benefits of their contributions.

Bulletin

Editor: Charles White
Designer: Harvey Retzloff
Project Director: Mabel C. McKinney-Browning

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The Use of the Media

In a number of communities around the country the use of radio and newspapers has reaped benefits for LRE. In this section we will examine some cities where LRE teachers and the local media have worked together to help students develop a new appreciation of the media and its role in current events.

Student Journalists

"The best thing about this program is that adults are hearing the youth point of view," according to Ann Ely, the Newspapers In Education (NIE) Coordinator at Indianapolis' evening paper, *The Indianapolis News*. "It makes it a lot easier to understand where kids are coming from when you read their own writing."

With support from the Indiana Juvenile Justice Task Force, *The Indianapolis News* conducts a program in which they assign an editorial writer to social studies teachers who have law-related education units in their curriculum. The partnership produces articles and editorials written by students which are printed in the "Editorial" section of the paper once a month during the school year. The social studies teacher concentrates on helping the students research a topic, while the editorial writer teaches students how to edit their own work. The subject focus of the section is chosen by the class from among contemporary issues of interest to them.

The students in Indianapolis also put together mock press conferences. They learn how to formulate initial questions and follow-up questions for an interview. At times these efforts blossom into an actual press conference with a well-known personality.

In Chicago, the Constitutional Rights Foundation has worked closely with the *Chicago Sun-Times* newspaper on a similar project. The paper has provided high school students with space for a weekly column in the paper to write about constitutional issues, to conduct political and public opinion polls, and to write editorials. Many newspapers have an NIE (Newspapers in Education) coordinator who, like Ann Ely, will be able to answer questions about this type of project. If not, there will undoubtedly be writers in your community interested in working with students on these projects.

Students on Radio

The Constitutional Rights Foundation in Chicago also cooperated with the local public radio station on a show titled "Youth and Justice," which aired once a week. High school students worked closely with a regular host and prepared interviews and commentaries on current legal and political issues. They used this format with various guests.

Carolyn Pereira, Executive Director of CRF, notes that an enthusiastic staff person at the station can be invaluable. That person will help students prepare individual program formats and questions, find interesting guests, and tap political and social experts who can enrich the programs.

The LRE program of the Arkansas Attorney General's Office, was successful in having a high school journalist segment added to the "Editor's Round Table Program," a daily political program. Working with the Arkansas High School Press Association, the public radio people provided selected students with the opportunity to research specific legal issues and to question local authorities and experts on the subject matter. They also conducted a call-in segment of the show. The callers were predominantly high school students who were encouraged to make this a part of the classroom experience.

Students worked with radio writers and engineers, seeing first-hand how the station operated. This experience not only made the students more politically and socially aware, but it gave students a sense of the challenge of producing a radio program.

American Lawyers Auxiliary

"Law-related education has been supported by the American Lawyers Auxiliary for over sixteen years," notes Catherine Jurgemeyer, Chair of the American Lawyer's Auxiliary's Youth Education for Citizenship Committee.

When the Indiana Bar Foundation made law-related education a priority, Indiana Law Auxiliary members brought together school administrators, social studies teachers, attorneys, judges, law enforcement personnel and representatives from local media for a series of dinner meetings. Samples of study materials were made available, and sample LRE presentations were performed.

The groups represented at these orientation dinners were an almost perfect blend of the legal and business communities. The media helped disseminate the "message" enthusiastically because of the obvious need for such programs in the schools. As an unexpected benefit, the media coverage actually helped secure members for advisory boards and local planning committees. The Indiana Law Auxiliary and the Indiana Bar Foundation also set aside a fund for grants to interested schools.

The state LRE coordinator and the auxiliary members are vital to cooperative programs. Auxiliary members help organize court tours statewide, and distribute packets of materials on the courts that the auxiliary helps write. Members also assist in the state mock trial competitions by recruiting attorneys and other community people to act as judges and coaches. The auxiliary co-sponsors, usually with community assistance, "Citizen Awareness of the Law" awards around the state. Essay and/or poster contests are also auxiliary-sponsored activities.

The American Lawyers Auxiliary sponsors two National Merit Scholarships annually, and has also presented a Law-Related Education High School Teacher of the Year award for the past five years.

Ms. Jurgemeyer offers these pointers on successfully mobilizing the community:

1. Look for networking opportunities wherever possible. No local or state organization or business should be excluded from consideration for any idea or program.
2. Try something new if a need occurs. Be willing to experiment, but plan changes thoroughly.
3. Benefit from other experiences in LRE whenever possible; don't "re-invent the wheel."
4. Subject yourself to constant self-evaluation. Thoroughly examine all phases of your program and be willing to add or discard, or take entire new directions.

The Sports World Resources

Almost everyone in the community has something to add to a law-related curriculum. In St. Louis, "Sports in the Law" has become a very popular course. The project draws on athletes, former athletes, sports agents, referees, umpires, and even sporting goods representatives. These people bring a diverse perspective to the study of law.

The professional athlete and his agent can show how the law enters into an athlete's career from knowing how to read a contract to planning for that "after sports" future. Students learn that investments, deferred compensation programs, and business ventures are key components of a modern sports contract.

A consumer law unit is a perfect place to begin learning about the sporting goods business. Here a student will learn about the laws that govern the claims a product can make. Students can begin to get an understanding of both sides of a promotional contract between an athlete and the company, including what expectations are and what functions each party must perform. Students will appreciate the great amount of legal work that goes into a Michael Jordan commercial for McDonald's or Nike shoes.

The referee or umpire will add insight into the rules of games and why rules are important to life as well as sports. Even the security police at an arena will have an interesting perspective on the rights of fans, and the safety of fans and athletes.

Commercial Artists and Publishers

Commercial artists do the drawings and layouts for newspaper and magazine advertisements. What do they have to know about truth in advertising law? What do they need to know about a product's copyrights and what may and may not be used in a drawing or a photograph? What are the limits on presenting a caricature of a living person? A dead person? A lyric from a song? Students can also learn what publishers of these magazines and newspapers need to know about the law to be successful in their fast-paced businesses. In other words, every idea about who might be valuable in the classroom is worth pursuing.

Working with the Public Utilities

The St. Louis Public Schools have developed a unique relationship with Southwestern Bell Telephone and the Union Electric Company. Through the work of Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity and the Division of Youth Services (DYS) of

the Department of Youth Services for the State of Missouri, these four entities have created units for pre-school and secondary LRE studies. It evolved this way.

Phi Alpha Delta needed a new LRE manual to help pre-school educators. Armentha Russell, the coordinator of the Law and Education Program in the St. Louis Public Schools, was chosen to write this material. At the time this project began, DYS was looking for a way to provide help with exactly this type of program in the school system. DYS suggested that Armentha approach the National Council on Crime Prevention to test the feasibility of using NCCP's "McGruff" Crime Prevention Dog program.

Southwestern Bell's public relations department had an interest in LRE as well. Southwestern Bell's "Pioneers" are a group of retired employees who meet on a regular basis and do community service. Southwestern Bell provided funds for the McGruff Dog puppets and accompanying materials for classrooms in thirty pre-school centers, along with purchasing the McGruff costume for an adult (one of the Pioneers) to wear during visits to the classes.

The Phi Alpha Delta manual and the McGruff Crime Prevention materials are used together in these pre-school centers because of the fortuitous link among the community organizations. These units focus on legal concepts that pre-school and grade school youngsters can talk and learn about, like justice, liberty, and rules to live by everyday. The lessons also focus on child safety and dealing with strangers.

It is safe to conclude that no idea for linking community organizations and civic groups should be dismissed as too unlikely to succeed.

Recognition of Law-Related Education Among Civic Groups

An increasing number of organizations have given their support to law-related education. They have passed resolutions similar to the one in the box by the Michigan State Parent Teachers Association.

Here is a list of organizations which have passed similar resolutions:

National Organizations

The American Justinian Society of Jurists
International Association of Chiefs of Police, Inc.,
National Association of Attorneys General
National District Attorneys Association
National League of Cities
National Sheriffs' Association, Alexandria, Virginia
Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, Washington, D.C.

State Organizations

Conference of Chief Justices, New York
The Florida Bar Association
Hawaii Council on Legal Education for Youth
Lawyers Wives of Michigan
Michigan State Parent Teachers Association
Michigan Probate and Juvenile Judges Association
Michigan Association of School Boards
Nevada State Bar Association
State of Michigan-Commission on Criminal Justice
Women Lawyers Association of Michigan

RESOLUTION
LAW-RELATED EDUCATION

WHEREAS, there is considerable evidence that juvenile and school crime are persisting problems in Michigan; and

WHEREAS, programs in law-related education have demonstrated that they have a role in reducing juvenile delinquency; and

WHEREAS, opportunities for instruction in law-related education would allow both elementary and secondary students to have an understanding and appreciation of the American Legal System; and

WHEREAS, the study of the law, its procedures, and its emphasis on justice can be a vehicle for ethical development;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Michigan State Parent Teachers Association believes that public understanding about the law should be recognized as an educational priority in the coming decade; and
2. the Michigan State Parent Teachers Association commends law-related education for its efforts in fostering high quality programs about the law and legal processes in our state's elementary and secondary schools; and
3. the Michigan State Parent Teachers Association calls upon legal, governmental and educational leaders, and the public to commit resources and energies in support of the statewide project to institutionalize law-related education in Michigan; and
4. the President of this Association is authorized to transmit this resolution to members of the State Legislature, the Governor, and other appropriate officials and encourage them to institute activities in furtherance of this resolution.

If any other support statements exist among our readers, please let us know by sending copies of the resolutions to:

American Bar Association, Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship, 750 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611

Jim Fine is a lawyer/educator and Project Coordinator for the ABA/YEFC's Education in Law and Juvenile Justice Project.